The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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SEEKING.

"And where and among what pleasant places
Have ye been, that ye come again
With your laps so full of flowers and your faces
Like buds blown fresh after rain?"
"We have been," said the children, speaking
In their gladness, as the birds chime,
All together,—"we have been seeking
For the fairies of olden time;
For, we thought, they are only hidden,—
They would surely never go
From this green earth all unbidden,
And the children that love them so.
Though they come not around us leaping,
As they did when they and the world
Were young, we shall find them sleeping
Within some broad leaf curled,
For the lily its white door closes,
But only over the bee;
And we looked through the summer roses,
Leaf by leaf, so carefully!
But, we thought, rolled up we shall find them
Among mosses old and dry;
From gossamer threads that bind them
They will start like the butterfly,
All winged. So we went forth seeking,
Yet still they have kept unseen,
Though we think our feet have been keeping
The track where they have been.
For we saw where their dance went flying
O'er the pastures snowy white,
Their seats and their tables lying
O'erthrown in their sudden flight.
And they, too, have had their losses,
For we found the goblets, white
And red, in the old spiked mosses,
That they drank from over night;
And in the pale horn of the woodbine
Was some wine left clear and bright.
But we found," said the children, speaking
More quickly, "so many things
That we soon forgot we were seeking,—
Forgot all the fairy rings,
Forgot all the stories olden,
That we hear round the fire at night,
Of their gifts and their favors golden,
The sunshine was so bright;
And the flowers,—we found so many
That it almost made us grieve
To think there were some, sweet as any,
That we were forced to leave,
As we left by the brookside lying
The balls of drifted foam,
And brought (after all our trying)
These Guelder roses home."

"Then, oh," I heard one speaking
Beside me soft and low,
"I have been, like the blessèd children, seeking,
Still seeking to and fro;
Yet not like them, for the fairies
They might pass unmourned away
For me, that had looked on angels,—
On angels that would not stay.
No! not though in haste before them
I spread all my heart's best cheer,
And made love my banner o'er them,
If it might but keep them *here*.
They stayed but a while to rest them:
Long, long before its close,
From my feast, though I mourned and pressed them,
The radiant guests arose;
And their flitting wings struck sadness
And silence: never more
Hath my soul won back the gladness
That was its own before.

No, I mourned not for the fairies
When I had seen hopes decay
That were sweet unto my spirit
So long. I said, 'If they,
That through shade and sunny weather
Have twined about my heart,
Should fade, we must go together,
For we can never part!'
But my care was not availing.
I found their sweetness gone;
I saw their bright tints paling:
They died, yet I lived on.

"Yet seeking, ever seeking,
Like the children, I have won
A guerdon all undreamt of
When first my quest begun.
And my thoughts come back like wanderers,
Outwearied, to my breast:
What they sought for long they found not,
Yet was the unsought best.
For I sought not out for crosses,
I did not seek for pain;
Yet I find the heart's sore losses
Were the spirit's surest gain."

— *Dora Greenwell.*

GOD AND THE SOUL.

By religion, I fear, is now practically understood something that men are bound to believe or something they are bound to do or some principles that ought to regulate and control their conduct,—that is, something *impersonal*, whether of truth or of obligation, and not simply a living condition of soul, sympathy, and fellowship that binds them into the life of God, and through the flowings of personal intercourse makes them partakers of his fulness. As long as we contemplate truth only as a system of doctrine, or duty only as a system of laws and principles, we are in communication only with what is impersonal and formal, which may have no power at all to recommend itself to our affections or to kindle vital energy in us. But if, through the life of prayer, we are in communication with the spirit of our Father, who is ever gently striving to reveal himself to us, then we are not dealing with any final or outward measures of truth and duty, but with their ever-living Source; and light from the Fount of light is entering into us as we are able to bear it.

Of course, this representation of religion proceeds upon the assumed fact, as the finding of our experience, that God does give promptings and communications from himself to the soul and conscience that are daily turned to him, waiting to receive,—communications not in the forms of intellectual truth, but in new quickenings of the spirit, in the sense of a life stirring in us that is not our own, in the consciousness of a goodness and a holiness moving us forward, and never suffering us to stay and rest content with what we are,—as though our nature could ever be a measure for itself,—and in the consequent convictions of deep peace that we are not our own or in our own keeping, but, if we will believe it, the children of a Spirit from whom comes all that we have and are, whose light we are receiving, whose promptings we are obeying, whose promises we are trusting, whose love we are feeling, and who, as the underlying spring of whatever stirs or emanates in us, is alone the measure or the limit of our being and our growth.

A religious man, of Christ's order, is not one who believes in certain doctrines about God, and desires to live in conformity with those doctrines. He is one who is in personal communion with God himself, whose spirit looks to the Holy Spirit for light and love and peace by the direct action of soul on soul, whose faith rests ultimately upon no outward evidences of divine goodness, and can be shaken by no conflicting appearances, upon no doubtful reasonings and upon no uncertain philosophy, but upon the experiences of a living and inward action of God's spirit as a fact of consciousness. Religion is not the knowledge or the study or the practice of impersonal truth: it is to be in direct and living fellowship with a personal God. The first may belong to a very lofty state of the moral character: the other alone is the attitude of a child in filial relations with the Author and Feeder of his nature.

A religious man is a man whose soul communes with the living God. A church is a fellowship of such men,—the fellowship with one another of those, each of whom is in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. And the Church of the living God is the collection of all souls throughout the universe who consciously draw, or desire to draw, their spiritual life from him, to each of whom by personal communion God is a living God.—*John Hamilton Thom, from "Christ the Revealer."*

THE STILL HOUR.

IN SHADOW.

God sets some souls in shade, alone:
They have no daylight of their own.
Only in lives of happier ones
They see the shine of distant suns.

God knows. Content thee with thy night.
Thy greater heaven hath grander light.
To-day is close. The hours are small:
Thou sitt'st afar, and hast them all.

Lose the best joy, that doth but blind;
Reach forth a larger bliss to find.
To-day is brief: the inclusive spheres
Rain raptures of a thousand years.

—*A. D. T. Whitney.*

THE LARGER HOPE.

I must confess to intolerance of opinion as to these two points,—eternal evil in any form and (included in it) eternal suffering. To believe in these would take away my God, who is all loving.—*Lady Byron.*

Let us, then, hope for all. The way may be more difficult for some natures than for others; but He who is light and goodness, and eternally consistent, will sometimes let his voice be heard, and raise them to light and harmony.—*Fredrika Bremer.*

Let spirit change forms as it will, I know that nothing is really lost. The human soul contains within itself the universe. If the stars are blotted out, and the heavens rolled up as a scroll, they are not lost.—*Lydia Maria Child.*

Here may we best reconcile our minds to the approach of the night of death, and exalt our conceptions of the eternal morning which shall unclose every eye and restore the long-suspended energies of every soul.—*Harriet Martineau.*

There are some things of which the most clear and unanswerable reasoning could not convince me. One of these is that a wise, all-powerful, and loving Father can create an immortal spirit for eternal misery.—*Mary Carpenter.*

I do not myself see how a reflecting soul can endure the passage through life, except by confidence in a Power that must at last order all things right.—*Margaret Fuller Ossoli.*

So at the loom of life we weave
Our separate shreds that varying fall,—
Some stained, some fair,—and, passing, leave
To God the gathering up of all
In that full pattern, wherein man
Works blindly out the eternal plan.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

More bitter far than all
It was to know that love could change and die!
Hush! for the ages call,
"The love of God lives through eternity,
And conquers all."

—*Adelaide A. Procter.*

What are we that we should place limits to the infinite mercy of the Lord and Giver of life, unto whom all life returns?—*Dinah Muloch Craik.*

Free will cannot go outside of mercy.—*Phœbe Cary.*

There must remain for the souls which God has made and purified, both work to do for him and joy in him and in one another. There must be the service of his creatures, the learning of his truth, the reconciliation with every foe, the reunion of immortal affection, and the everlasting approach, nearer and nearer through the infinite ages, to perfect goodness and to him who is supremely good.—*Frances Power Cobbe, "Hopes of the Human Race."*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book.*" This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves

packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 373 *Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.?*

The Milton Branch offer the following. Address Miss Louise W. Hobbey, Milton, Mass., P.O. Box 334.

Music.

Bassini's "Education of the Young Voice"; "College Songs"; "Unity Services and Songs"; "Hymns and Tunes"; "Funeral March," H. Maylath; "Cadet Polka," Franz von Suppe; The *Folio* for June, 1895; "Grand March," Victor Vogel; "Last Kiss Waltz"; "Wanda Polka Mazurka"; "Ruby March"; "The Whip-poor-will"; "Dudes' March"; "When the leaves begin to fade," (waltz song), Snow; "County Fair," Dan Cohn; "Nine O'clock in the Morning"; "British Patrol March"; "Musical Vade Mecum," Herrman S. Saroni.

Educational.

Readers: Franklin's "Fourth"; Hillard's "Fourth" and "Second"; "Hillard's "Intermediate"; Harper's "Second"; Sargent's "Fourth"; Monroe's "Fifth"; Sheldon's "Fourth"; "Interstate Primer and First Reader."

"New Elementary Algebra," Davis; "New Elementary Algebra," Wentworth; "School Algebra," Wentworth; "Plane and Spherical Trigonometry," Chauvenet; "Plane Analytic Geometry"; "Elementary Arithmetic," Bradbury; "Elementary Arithmetic," Franklin; "First Steps in Numbers," Wentworth; "Book-keeping Rationalized," George N. Comer; "Practical Book-keeping," Mayhew; "Elementary Treatise on Plane and Solid Geometry," Peirce; "Arithmetic of Electricity," Sloane; "Practical Telephone Hand-book," Poole; "Telephone Lines," Hopkins; "Testing of Wires and Cables"; "First Book in Botany," Youmans; "Child's Book of Nature" (Plants), Hooker; Parker's "Geographical Questions"; Barns's "Elementary Geography"; Guyot's "Elementary Geography"; Butler's "Complete Geography"; Warren's "Physical Geography"; "Physical Geography" (Advanced), Page; Xenophon's "Anabasis"; Xenophon's "Memorabilia"; "Herodotus," Part 2; "Latin Grammar," Andrews; "P. Ovidius Naso," Parts 2 and 3; Allen's "Latin Reader"; "Selections from Viri Romæ"; "Ladder to Latin," Thompson; "Virgil"; Smith's "First Latin Course," Parts 1 and 2; Goodwin's "Greek Grammar"; Arnold's "Greek Prose"; Goodwin's "Greek Reader"; Keep's "Iliad," Books 1 to 6; Anthon's "Anabasis"; "The Orations of Demosthenes on the Crown," Champlin; "Popular Orations of Demosthenes," Champlin; "Elementary Physics," Stewart; "Elements of Geology," Loomis; "Manual of Inorganic Chemistry"; "Manual of Dietetric," Fothergil; "Outlines of Astronomy," Herschel; "Elementary Lessons in Astronomy," Locker; Deschanel's "Natural Philosophy," (Sound and Light), Prof. Everett; "Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton," Bowen; "Philosophy of Rhetoric," Campbell; "Composition and Rhetoric," Hart; "The Cave Method of Drawing."

History.

"History of Rome," Creighton; "Ancient History," Susan Lane; "Prussia and Franco-Prussian War," J. S. C. Abbott; "Ancient Greece," Pennell; "History of Greece," Smith; "A Parallel History of France and England," C. M. Yonge; "Manual of Ancient History," Thalheimer; "Political History since 1815."

Miscellaneous.

"A Treatise on the Law of Trusts and Trustees," Perry (Boston, 1872); "Recent Art and Society"; "Pierre Toussaint"; "Thirty Short Stories," (one book); "Les Misérables," Victor Hugo (incomplete);

"The Phenix"; "Doreen," Edna Lyall; "Story of Francis Cludde," Stanley Weyman; "An Epistle to Posterity," Mrs. M. E. W. Sherwood; "7,000 Words often Mispronounced," Phyffe; "Political Economy," Rogers; "Left-overs," Mrs. Rorer; "Letters of Theo. Brown"; "English Synonyms"; "Tribute of Sympathy," Newnham; "Bible for Beginners," J. P. Hopps; New Testament; Bible; Ollendorff's "New Method of learning German" (and Key); Surenne's French Dictionary; "Corinne," Mme. de Staël; "French Word-book"; "Histoire Romaine," par V. Duruy; "Précis de la Révolution Française," par J. Michelet; Otto's "French Conversation and Grammar"; Sauer's "Spanish Grammar"; Worcester's Dictionary; "Three Darlings" (juvenile); "Bouquet of Flowers"; "Sacred Poems," N. P. Willis; "The Soldier Boy," Oliver Optic; "The Young Lieutenant"; "General Mosby's War Reminiscences"; "Talks upon Practical Subjects," Marion Harland; Music (instrumental and vocal).

The Church of the Disciples Sunday-school Branch offers the following books: "Lorna Doone," Blackmore; "Tales from Shakespeare," Lamb; "Romola"; "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," Holmes; "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush"; "Tale of Two Cities," Dickens; "Our New Mistress," Yonge; "Hedri; or, Blind Justice," Mathers; Bullion's "Latin Reader"; Bullion's and Morris's "Latin Lessons"; Ploetz Woeroth's "Easy French Method"; "A Man without a Country," Hale; "Donal Grant," Macdonald; "Ninety-three," Hugo; "Our Country," Strong; "Claudius Bombarnac," Jules Verne; "Idyls of the King," Tennyson; Emerson's "Essays, First Series." Address Miss Lena L. Carpenter, Church of the Disciples, Warren Avenue, Boston, Mass.

The following are offered by the Brattleboro branch. Address Mrs. G. E. Foster, 24 Canal Street, Brattleboro, Vermont.

Hillard's "Third Reader"; Stoddard's "Practical Arithmetic"; "Introduction to Study of English Grammar"; Tower's "Elements of Grammar"; "Rudiments of Written Arithmetic"; Sargent's "First Reader"; Franklin's "Fifth Reader"; "Progressive Third Reader"; Felter's "Analysis of Arithmetic."

The following books are offered by the Second Church branch, Salem. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass. First requests must contain reference.

"Morning Glories," Louisa Alcott; "Aunt Jo's Scrap Bag"; "Gates Ajar," E. S. Phelps; "American Girl Abroad," A. Trafton; "His Inheritance"; "Shirley," Charlotte Brontë; "Real Folks," Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney; "Memoir of Robert Chambers"; "Natural History in One Syllable"; German Dictionary; "Home in the West"; "How she came into her Kingdom."

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado.) 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.)

"John Halifax, Gentleman," and "Floral Biography," by Charlotte Elizabeth, are asked for by Mrs. Sue I. Deal, Cedar Valley, Caldwell County, North Carolina.

Mr. Fred Gear, East Machias, Maine, would be very glad of the second volume of "Beauties and Wonders of Land and Sea." Mr. Gear suffers from chronic rheumatism, free from pain only when lying on his back. Some one (no address given) sent him the first volume, and he is anxious to obtain the second.

Mrs. L. V. Lamb, Kickapoo, Anderson County, Texas, a poor widow living twenty miles from a railroad, is anxious for any good reading, which she will gladly pass on.

We are teaching here, and so many children are without books. Won't you send me any surplus McGuffey's Readers, spelling-books, geography, grammar, and arithmetic; also song-books. Mrs. M. C. Philpin, Hoxbar, Indian Territory.

Mrs. Andrew Bailey, Jr., Allwood, Amherst County, Virginia, formerly Miss Lucy M. Goodwin, asks for "The Grip of Honor," and "Wanted a Match-maker," by Paul Leicester Ford.

Ella F. Griggs, Kola, Virginia, would be pleased to receive "Stepping Heavenward."

Mrs. N. C. Higginbotham, Pleasant View, Amherst County, Virginia, will be glad of any reading.

Mr. W. A. Gattis Foster, a shut-in, Summerfield, North Carolina, would be glad to receive copies of the *Art Amateur* and *Art Interchange* containing articles on crayon and pastel painting, also any books on the same subject. Any good reading in the way of books and magazines will be gladly received.

Mrs. Ellen Oliver, Blue Ridge, Texas, asks for general reading.

May I write you in regard to my educational work? I am in school, but am dependent. I would be very glad to have anything in an English language course, European history, or anything of the English classics. I am preparing for more efficient work in the ministry. I am now using some books sent me by the Cheerful Letter friends. May God bless them. Fraternally, Newton M. Talbot, Trenton, Texas.

Miss Ida Greer, Blackstone, North Carolina, asks for "David Copperfield," "Stepping Heavenward," and "Ivanhoe."

Dear Madam,—This is the first time I have tried to address the *Cheerful Letter* circle. I hope you will find room for me, and I will be greatly obliged to you or any of the readers of *The Cheerful Letter* for any good reading you will kindly send me. I have two small girls and a boy to supply with reading. We all enjoy the little *Cheerful Letter;* and, seeing so many in its columns that have been cheered and benefited, I felt I would like to be one of them. I would be glad to receive the book entitled "Told in the Hills," or stories by American authors, or any good book or magazine, will be thankfully received by Mrs. Julia Liston, Salem, Marion County, Oregon.

I am only thirteen years old; but I dearly love to read, and would be very glad if you would ask the *Cheerful Letter* friends to send me and my brother, eleven years old, something to read. My father is a farmer, and my mother is an invalid, hardly able to attend to her housework; and we do not live near any church or school, or have opportunities like other children, living in towns or better neighborhoods, for improvement. My father and mother are members of a church at Sandy Ridge, North Carolina; and Mr. Miller of Danbury, North Carolina, is the pastor. He preaches once a month, but we cannot often attend. (Miss) Lelia L. Martin, Dobyns, Virginia.

My dear Mrs. Nichols,—I so often lift up my heart and soul in thankfulness to God that I have learned of the dear *Cheerful Letter* Book Club. My gratitude knows no bounds for a few interesting books I've received. Had I known of you in earlier life, my years of affliction and suffering would have been brightened. I have been able to teach during the past two winters. My last term closed with a concert. The best pieces I had were sent by *Cheerful Letter* friends. I shall be very thankful for any drills, acting charades, recitations, declamations, dialogues, or anything of the kind that any friend may have to dispose of. I'll mention a few coveted books I shall be pleased to receive if any of them are at hand to give away: "Titus, a Comrade of the Cross," by Florence Kingsley; "Silverwood"; "The Earth trembles," by Roe; "Alice of Old Vincennes," by Maurice Thompson; "Vanity Fair"; "Ivanhoe," by Scott; "The Lust of Hate"; "The Scourge of God." I advance thanks for any of these. My sisters and brother are book-lovers. I also offer and lend books to any and all my friends who will read them. I ask an interest in the prayers of all Christian people who may chance to see this. I need aid and encouragement. Miss Mattie E. Sale, Dellaplane, Wilkes County, North Carolina.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[*Contributions to this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, 26 Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.*]

A LETTER.

The letters and articles published in the "Mothers' Council" are always read with interest by me; and they must be a benefit, indeed, to those who have children to train for the duties and responsibilities of life.

An interesting question is that brought before us some time ago as to whether or not there is favoritism shown by parents among their children, as a rule, and whether

their partiality is more in favor of boys or of girls. According to my observation, boys are usually allowed more privileges than girls; and, even in families where all the work is done by members of the home circle, they are called upon to render few duties in comparison with their sisters. A mother, speaking recently of this to me, said: "Yes, I know we exact less from our boys than from our girls; but we have to. A boy will not be bound down to little homely duties as a girl will. He will leave home first."

This is a mistake, as is proven in homes where the training and example have been what they should be. One mother whom I know calls upon her boys for any assistance they can render, and meets with as ready response from them as if they were well-trained girls. When a real difference is felt,—when, I mean, the boy feels his sister should be helpful to those with whom she dwells, while he is under no obligation to be so,—it must surely be through some fault of home training or home influence.

Once some little children were gathered about a table with me, preparatory to playing a game. "I am going to have first go," announced a little girl. "No," said her bright-eyed brother, "I am." "But," protested the little girl, "I spoke for it first." "That don't make any difference," stoutly answered the brother. "I can go first 'cause I'm a boy." He finally yielded when told that for that very reason—because he was a boy, and older and stronger than the little girl—he should be willing to give up to her. In some families this feeling predominates; and the girls are expected not only to do the homely, every-day tasks that should be divided among themselves and brothers, but to do such service for the heir of the house as would be performed by his valet, did he have one.

Not always, however, is the difference shown between boy and girl. Sometimes one daughter is favored above another, or a son above his brother,—something that cannot usually be done without causing hard feelings and jealousy in the heart of the unfavored one. Thus is discord sometimes sown in a family where harmony would otherwise be, and children become estranged from one another who would have been closest friends and comrades had their parents exercised wisdom and justice.

My heart has often bled for a certain child I know,—a little girl of commonplace gifts and graces,—whose younger sister has been blessed with an unusual charm and originality both of mind and manner. The difference between the two is often mentioned in their presence, thus making the first painfully conscious of her shortcomings, and, consequently, more awkward than is natural with her, while it tends, alas! to cause the second to put herself forward in a way sometimes that will be far from becoming when she has grown older. The mother often says, in their hearing, that she will have to give the older one a good beginning at school before allowing the younger to start, as otherwise the latter will soon surpass the former in her studies. Yet who can tell? The unexpected often happens in the development and unfolding of mind and character, as well as in other things. And slumbering deep in the being of this seemingly dull child (of any seemingly dull child, in truth) may be latent powers of which none dream.

Margaret A. Richard.

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON BY REV. WILLIAM C. BURNS.

No woman is fitted to mould human life until her own life has first been moulded to the likeness of the Christ-life. To simply perpetuate low aims, frivolous characters, Mammon worshipping beings, is to curse rather than to bless. This is not the end nor kingdom to which woman has been called. A message has gone forth,—not to a favored one, but to every woman, whatever may be her position. Some are faithfully and heroically striving to obey the command: others are indifferent. They are asleep. But sleep must give place to work, indifference to interest, selfish ease to self-sacrifice. Littleness, worldliness, must all give way to the execution of the command: "Knowest thou, O woman, that thou art come for such a time and work as this? If indifferent, thou wilt sink into insignificance and another will take up the crown and sceptre which might have been thine."

Donald Mitchell says, "Man without some sort of religion is at best a poor reprobate, a football of destiny." But a woman without religion is worse. She is a flame

without heat, a rainbow without color, a flower without perfume. That sweet trustfulness, that abiding love, that endearing hope, which man needs in every scheme of life is not then hers to give. But let the love of Christ take full possession of a woman's heart, and under its inspiration let her grow in purity, in character, till at last she come to a perfect woman,—"to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,"—then from human lips—of husband, children, kindred, neighbors, friends, and from Him who sitteth upon the throne—will come the benediction, "Blessed art thou among women."

NATURAL HISTORY.

AN HOUR WITH THE BIRDS.

If we can have but one hour with the birds, dear reader, we will spend it in the loveliest nook I know,—a wild garden, forever green in my memory, on the banks of the "shining water" at the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

It is June; and we are sitting under a low tree, buried up to our shoulders in a luxuriant growth of weeds. Before us towers beautiful Cheyenne, its wonderful red rocks gorgeous in the morning sun; above us stretches the violet-blue sky; while all about us, filling our lungs and bracing and invigorating our whole being, is the glorious mountain air of Colorado. Outside our shady nook the sunshine glows and burns, but we are cool and comfortable.

The little field between our seat and the mountain is all given up to weeds, with here and there a small oak-tree, and shut in by a hedge of oak saplings and low willows. I say weeds, but think not of an Eastern weed-grown spot: imagine neither pigweed, smartweed, burdock, nor sorrel. Rather, picture in your mind a flower-bed, more rich and gay than ever met your admiring eyes,—yellow daisies by thousands turning their shining faces to the sun; royal purple clusters of a blossoming mint glowing in the sun; larkspurs four feet high thrusting themselves above the rest, like blue banners, here and there; while lower down peep out white and blue and lavender and other modest posies; and everywhere our familiar wood's flower, the wild geranium (whose office it seems to be in Colorado to fill up vacancies), much larger and more luxuriant than ours, though quite as dainty and as impatient of handling. Almost within reach of our hand we easily count a dozen varieties of blossoms, while at the back of the little field are masses of a tall plant gone to seed. This departed bloom must have resembled our elder in shape and size; and now it makes a wonderful display of seeds in all shades of green, yellow, and golden brown, according to the various degrees of ripeness. It is very effective, almost more beautiful than blossoms,—certainly more harmonious.

Over all this growing glory flutter butterflies and bees, and still higher zigzag dozens of gay dragon-flies. Behind us, a few steps away, is the brook Minnelowan, whose musical murmur is in our ears; but we will not turn around just yet. Truly, it is good to be here,—to rest from the world of conventionality; to get into harmony with nature; to steep our souls, as it were, in the wildness, the freshness, and the eternal youth of the growing world about us.

But we are seeking birds: we must subdue our expression of admiration, we must control our enthusiasm, and listen. Now we become aware of low, sharp, insect-like cries about us. They seem to come from all sides at once. We find it impossible to locate them till a sudden chorus of loud and excited "smacks" directs our attention to the tree over our heads; and our eyes fall upon a pair of frantic little fellow-creatures in golden yellow hopping about on the branches, posturing and gesticulating with vehemence, and addressing their remarks most pointedly to us.

How are we offending, sitting motionless and silent as we are? Why, we have invaded what they consider their domain. Those insect-like chirps are the voices of their little folk, probably just out of the nest, brand-new, ignorant, and curious babies, who know no better than to stare at us, and make their comments within reach of our hands. They are not yet trained to know and avoid their greatest enemy, which you may not know, dear reader, that you are,—not because you are bloodthirsty, but because you belong to a bloodthirsty race.

Now one of the babies comes in sight, in soft olive with golden suggestions on tail and body; but mamma, horrified that he

has exposed himself to our gaze, hurries him away. And soon the chorus of "peeps" and "smacks," the yellow-bird baby talk, grows more distant, and the whole family of golden warblers is gone.

It is remarkable how much these little folk know about our ways. If we walk through their domains talking and laughing, the birds will go on about their own affairs, singing and calling and carrying on their domestic concerns as though we were blind and deaf, as, indeed, most of us are to the abundant life about us. But, when they see us quiet, looking at them, showing interest in their younglings, they recognize us at once as a suspicious variety of the *genus homo*, who must be watched. At once they are on guard: they turn shy and try to slip out behind a bush, or, if hampered by an untrained family of little ones, attempt to expostulate with us or to drive us away. All this time you have perhaps been conscious of a delicious little song, like the ringing of a silver bell, over at the edge of our wild garden. Now listen: you will hear a rustle as of dead leaves, a low utterance like a hoarse "mew," then an instant's pause and the bell song again. Turn your glass toward the thick shubbery at a point where you can see the ground at the foot to the bushes. In a moment you catch a glimpse of the mysterious bell-ringer, nearly as big as a robin, modestly dressed in black and white and chestnut, going about very busily on the ground, now giving a little jump that throws a light shower of dirt and leaves into the air, then looking earnestly in the spot thus uncovered, perhaps picking something up, then hopping to the lowest twig of the bush and flinging out upon the air his joyous song. We are fortunate to see him so soon: he might tantalize us all day with his song, and never give us a glimpse of himself; for he delights in these quiet places, under the thickest shrubs. He is the towhee bunting, or chewink, sometimes called ground robin; and in that corner of Colorado he takes the place of the robin with us, the most common bird about the house.

Keep very still, and we may perhaps hear his most ecstatic song; for remember it is June, the wooing and nesting time of our feathered friends, when their songs and their plumes are in perfection. The love-song of the chewink is simply his usual silver bell peal, with the addition of two rich notes in tremolo,—first a note lower on the scale than the bell, then a note higher, each a soft, delicious, rapturous utterance, impossible to describe, but enchanting to hear.

The nest is no doubt close by, but it will be lost time to hunt for it in a wilderness of bushes like this; for it is a mere cup in the ground, hidden under the thickest shrub that madam, the brown-clad spouse of the towhee, can find. If we did uncover it, we might not recognize it, so perfectly do the colors of the birds, old and young, and even the eggs, harmonize with the earth in which it is placed.

Now let us turn around, take a few steps, and the world is totally changed for us. Let us seat ourselves under a tall old pine-tree, whose delicious aroma the hot sun draws out and the gentle breeze wafts down to refresh and delight us here below.

Before us is the brook, faint-hearted in manner and only a murmur where last summer it was a roar. Alas! the beautiful brook has seen reverses since first I lingered on its banks with joy and admiration. Far up above, just after it leaves the rocky walls of Cheyenne Cañon, it has fallen into the greedy hands of men who have drawn half of it off for their private service. So the sparkling waters which gathered themselves together near the top of Cheyenne, leaped gayly over the seven steps of the falls, and rushed and bounded over the rocks in the cañon, now run tamely down between rows of turnips and potatoes, water an alfalfa field, bathe the roots of a row of tired-looking trees, or put a lawn asoak. The fragment that is left winds on its old way, not half filling its bed, with a subdued babble suited to its altered proportions.

Still, there is enough to delight a brook-lover; and this spot is the chosen home of the most bewitching little beauty in all Colorado, the Arkansas goldfinch. Clumsy name enough for a tiny sprite of a birdling, not so large as our charming little goldfinch in his black cap. He is exquisite in olive-green, with golden yellow breast and the black cap and wings of his family; and he is most winsome in manner, with every tone in his varied utterance musical and delicious to hear. As he flies over in bounding

waves, calling "Swee-eet! swee-eet!" often ending with an entrancing tremolo, your very soul is taken captive. What would you not give to see the dainty cradle of his younglings? Not far away you may see two thistle blooms pulled to pieces. No doubt the down has gone to make a bed for goldfinch babies; for nothing that grows, except thistle down, is quite soft and delicate enough for the purpose.

We will not try to find the nest. He is the most shy, the most elusive of birds, living in the tops of the tallest trees, and flitting from one to another like a sunbeam, showing only a glint of a golden breast as he goes. One is maddened by the medley of calls and scraps of song, the trills and tremolos in the sweetest and most enticing tones, while not able to catch so much as a glimpse of the bonny bird who utters them. His love-song is utterly captivating, as rapturous as that of the American goldfinch, with a touch of plaintiveness that makes it wonderfully thrilling. It is mostly in tremolo, a sort of indescribable vocal "shake," that is enchanting beyond the power of words to express. When he is not singing, one may often hear his low, earnest chatter and talk with his mate in the same plaintive and winsome tones.

Ah! how little one can see of what goes on about us, though we are closely watching, and every sense is alert! On one side is a flash of wings, and somebody disappears before he is seen. From the other side come an unfamiliar note and a rustle of leaves, behind which the author is hidden. Here two bird voices are heard in excited talk, but your hasty glance falls only on the swaying twig that proclaims their flight; and in the tops of tall trees is a whole world of life and action entirely beyond your vision.

Yet enough is left to repay patient waiting. From across the little brook comes the unceasing cry of the Maryland yellow-throat, "Witches here! witches here!" And you can readily believe him, especially as with your best efforts you can see scarcely more than a suggestion of his quaint black mask as a small form dives into the thick bushes.

Here comes a whole family reviling us, six or seven of them, running up and down the branches of a great bush, all scolding at the top of their voices,—a family of house wrens lately emancipated from their wooden castle in that old stump across the brook,—pert and saucy little parents, and droll babies imitating them with spirit.

Our hour has passed all too quickly; and we close our glasses, fold our camp-chairs, and start for the camp. As we turn into the gate, another voice strikes our ear,—louder, richer, more attention-compelling than any we have heard. Listen! It is the wonder and the glory of the West; it is the most intoxicating, the most soul-stirring of bird voices in the land where thrushes are absent; it embodies the solitude, the vastness, the mystery of the mesa: it is the Western meadow-lark.

There is nothing beyond that to hear, and our hour is long passed.—*Olive Thorne Miller, in Christian Register.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

All contributions to this column should be sent to Miss K. C. Porter, 22 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.]

RIDDLE

I.

I'm only a fish to be taken and eaten,
Or else I'm a rod with which none have been beaten.
I'm often a rest: so have weary ones found,
Who, when I'm at hand, will not sleep on the ground.

(*From St. Nicholas.*)

II.

The letters in each word underlined may be transposed so as to form the name of a tree.

In a cabin a *mile north*, on the river *Wye*, lives old *Lem* with his pet *lamb*. *Clouts* of old *crape* fill the place of window *panes* and door *panel*. Possessed of *ample* means, he *has* not *cared* to wear other covering than a ragged *dolman*, nor to drink from any but a *cheap* blue *mug*. At night he goes to *reap* the harvest of his *melon* patch. He will take a *lamp* in one hand to *allure* insects, and a *tile* or *lump* or *rock* in the other, with which to slay a possible weasel.

(*From St. Nicholas.*)

III.

Rhymed Numerical Enigma.

The 1 2 of 2 3 4 and 2 3 4 5
Was a most apprehensive 1 2 3 4 5.
She forbade 2 3 4
To go near the shore,
And told 2 3 4 5
Not to swim or to dive.
"For," she said, "when you are
Near the 3 4 5,
It is quite 1 2 3 that I 4 5.'
But all she could do
Would not check 4 3 2
Nor her unruly son
Her 4 3 2 1,
So the patience of 5 4 3 2 1 was gone.

(*From St. Nicholas.*)

IV.

By starting at the right letter in one of the following words, and then taking every third letter, a couplet may be found.

Banjo, inert, o, sandwich, tease, tear, of, actual, illume, twine, flame, tush, stem, ore, dime, no, ajax, up, mite, on, sweet, atoms, oath, shines, actions, rhine, Bisons, ute, queen, owe, up.

(*From St. Nicholas.*)

V.

Conundrums.

1. What belongs to yourself and is used by everybody more than yourself?
2. Why is gooseberry pie like counterfeit money?
3. What is the difference between a young lady and an old one?

Answers to Puzzles in May Number.

I. *Charade.*—Hem-lock. Hemlock.
II. *Enigma.*—A key.

III.

Cipher.

You sigh for a cipher, but I sigh for thee.
Oh, sigh for no cipher, but, oh, sigh for me.
Let not your sigh for a cipher go;
But give sigh for sigh, for I sigh for thee so.

IV.

A birdie with a yellow bill
Hopped upon the window-sill,
Cocked his shining eye, and said,
"Ain't you 'shamed, you sleepy head?"

V.

Conundrums.

1. A—musing.
   Be—coming.
   De—lighting.
   En—(n)chanting.
2. Short
3. The 12.50, because it is ten to one if you catch it.
4. Because words are always passing between them.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

(*Continued from the Mothers' Council for May.*)

"I am willing to admit, therefore, that the work of education in any form is as great as any other work; but I fail to see why it should be greater. Usefulness is usefulness: there is no reason why it should be postponed from generation to generation, or why it is better to *rear* a serviceable human being than to be one in person. Carry the theory consistently out: each mother must simply rear her daughter, that she, in turn, may rear somebody else, so that it will be only the last woman who will personally do any service except that of motherhood; and, when her time comes, it will be too late for any service at all.

"If it be said 'But some of these children will be men, who are necessarily of more use than women,' I deny the necessity. If it be said, 'The children may be many, and the mother, who is but one, may well be sacrificed,' it might be replied that, as one great act may be worth many smaller ones, so all the numerous children and grandchildren of a woman like Lucretia Mott may not collectively equal the usefulness of herself alone. If she, like many women, had held it her duty to renounce all other duties and interests from the time her motherhood began, I think that the world, and even her children, would have lost more than ever could have been gained by her more complete absorption in the nursery."

Thus speaks Col. Higginson. We venture to add that it is unwholesome for a child to feel that his mother lives entirely for his services. And, if the facts are thus, he can hardly be prevented from feeling it. A mother will be *more* to her children by not completely effacing herself. Sometimes

the best education for a child is unselfish service. We have probably all witnessed the phenomenon of the gentle, unselfish mother devoted to the welfare of the exacting, spoiled children; and, less often, the reverse,— the selfish mother adored and tenderly cared for by daughters and sons who seem to the outer world strangely unconscious of her unpleasant traits. Neither condition is ideal, but it seems a greater kindness to a child to give him a noble and generous character than to make of him a selfish tyrant.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged — not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort — by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,— good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be no meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange in June. The May meeting is the last of the season.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

Members are kindly requested to send odd numbers of periodicals directly to places where they are needed. Rev. B. C. Hammond, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, is always glad to receive them.

Grant, O my God, that neither joy nor sorrow shall visit my heart in vain. Make me wise and strong to the performance of immediate duties, and ripen me by what means thou seest best for the performance of those that lie beyond.—*Margaret Fuller.*

DIRECTIONS.

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TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

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Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.